

FIRST NAZARENE CHURCH OF ONTARIO
(Gallery Theatre)
126 E. C Street
Southwest corner of Lemon and C Street
Ontario
San Bernardino
California

HABS No. CA-2343

HABS
CAL
36-ONT,
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF DRAWINGS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Western Region
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California 94107

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

FIRST NAZARENE CHURCH OF ONTARIO (Gallery Theatre) HABS NO. CA-2343

Location: 126 E. "C" Street
Southwest corner of Lemon and "C" Streets
City of Ontario
County of San Bernardino
California

HABS
CAL
36-ONT,
2-

U.S.G.S.
Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates
11 . 440110 . 3769430

Present Owner: City of Ontario
303 E. B Street
Ontario, California 91762

Present Occupant: Vacant

Present Use: None. Intended for demolition.

Statement of Significance:

Like many other early Southern California towns, in Ontario, California churches were very important in establishing a sense of community. Most of Ontario's early churches were built on corners in the center of town and became landmarks in the community.

The First Church of the Nazarene is one of Ontario's landmarks. It was the second home for the church having replaced a temporary wooden structure on West "C" Street. The church represents one of the best examples of Gothic Revival architecture in the city. The windows in the church are also significant. The glass, particularly the several shades of green, and design are very compatible with the concrete block and the simple lines of the Gothic Revival architecture. The church building served one of the large church populations in Ontario from 1908 until 1968. The denomination now worships on Fifth Street in Upland.

The parsonage for the church was built behind the church with similar block architecture in 1910. Both buildings occupied a prominent corner in Ontario.

From 1968 until 1972 several other denominations such as Christ Fellowship Foundation worshiped in the church.

In 1972 The Gallery Theatre Group of Upland, California converted the church, parsonage, and classroom building to community theater use. The company of players, active from 1967 - 89 has had many players go on to show business careers.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. **Date of erection:**
1908
2. **Architect / Builder:**
Unknown
3. **Original and subsequent owners:**
First Nazarene Church of Ontario
Gallery Theatre
Ontario Redevelopment Agency
4. **Builder, contractor, suppliers:**
Unknown
5. **Original plans and construction:**
Not available
6. **Alterations and additions:**
Attached to the south wall of the church and filling the ell of the intersecting gable wing is a one-story, frame building clad with smooth stucco. It was added in 1926 (Daily Report, May 11, 1926.) and remodeled in 1953 and again in 1972 when the church was converted for use of the Gallery Theatre. Alterations to this addition have also changed the west wall at the south corner. A one-story false front continues from this addition to another addition across the east facade of the parsonage. All of the additions are incompatible with the original structures but are reversible. The west wall is now propped by a temporary wood frame because of earthquake damage.

B. Historical Context

Ontario was named for the Canadian province of its founders, brothers George and William Chaffey. George Chaffey was the visionary of the two. He saw, according to Alexander, "a colony bearing the euphorias name of his native Canadian province, regarded by the people of the Americas as a model of the soundest principles of irrigation settlement and social organization - a city beautiful bathed in perpetual sunshine. Directly above it the hoary head of Old Baldy (Mount San Antonio) ten thousand feet high. . . nature and man thus combining to make this one of the most lovely spots ever selected for human habitation." In August, 1882 Chaffey

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made the first purchase of Ontario land. Succeeding purchases increased the Chaffey holdings to about ten-thousand acres.

Glenn Dumke says "the forty-odd miles of fertile valley land lying between Pasadena and San Bernardino. . . was the natural route for any railroad line extending east from Los Angeles. . . and both the Santa Fe and the Southern Pacific used this logical route." In 1882 Ontario land was laid out in 10-acre farm lots from the Southern Pacific Railroad on the south to the mountains on the north, except for a small townsite in the south part of town. Bernice Conley tells of the road "from the railroad to the mountains - a 200-foot wide avenue with a parkway in the center. George Chaffey named the avenue Euclid, after the mathematician and William Chaffey planted Australian natives to adorn the avenue.

George Chaffey's plan for the "Model Colony" of Ontario included four principles:

1. Distribution of water over the entire colony with no land sales until water was available.
2. Construction of a main thoroughfare from one end of the settlement to the other and design it (Euclid Avenue) so it would be a thing of beauty forever.
3. Provide a college for the agricultural education of the people of the colony and for the general education of their children.
4. Secure the "best possible class of settlers" by a reversionary clause in the deeds to each allotment forbidding the sale of liquor.

The last principle obviously attracted church people. Conley reports that "churches began by meeting in the hotel and as soon as possible built their own houses of worship. The order of congregations was as follows:

CHURCH	DEDICATION OR ACCOUNT OF
First Methodist Church nw cor "C" St. & Euclid Ave.	Jan. 15, 1888
Congregational Church, chapel "A" St.	March 21, 1888
Episcopalian Church (Christ Church) south of Cong. Church.	October 2, 1889
Congregational Church sw cor Holt Ave. & Palm St.	November 15, 1893
Christ Church Episcopal moved to "C" St. & Euclid Ave.	March 7, 1894
Westminster Presbyterian Church sw cor "E" St. and Euclid Ave.	August 4, 1895
St. George's Catholic Church sw cor Palm & "D" St.	October 11, 1899

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Baptist Church	
ne cor "E" St. & Euclid Ave.	October 7, 1901
German Evangelical Lutheran Church	
ne cor "F" St. & Euclid Ave.	May 4, 1902
First Nazarene Church, Euclid	
Euclid Ave. & "C" St.	
w/2-story frame bldg. from E. McManis	January 8, 1905
Lemon St. & "C" St.	1908
Seventh Day Adventists	
"B" St. & Vine St.	August 4, 1906
Christian Science Church	
222 W. "B" St. (permit)	February 14, 1911
Bethel Free Methodist Church	
W. Main St. & San Antonio Ave.	February 12, 1912
Bethel Congregational Church	
se cor "F" St. & Euclid Ave.	January, 1913
Grace Methodist Episcopal Church	
East Nevada	May 15, 1913
Seventh Day Adventists	
"B" St. & Vine St. -	
old church moved to back of lot	January 3, 1919

While the Nazarene church was not one of the first, it housed a large congregation and filled a major corner in the center of Ontario. It is also one of the best examples of Gothic Revival architecture in the city.

When the congregation moved to Upland in the late 1960s, The Gallery Theatre took over the buildings and provided entertainment for the entire area until 1889. The 1990 earthquake damaged the unreinforced masonry building. Several attempts were made to save the building culminating with a Request For Proposal to interested developers for a Tax Act project. Unfortunately, no proposals were received and the Ontario Redevelopment Agency Board (City Council) made the decision to demolish the building.

Prepared by: Judy Wright
Title: Principal
Affiliation: AEGIS, Planning for Historic Preservation
Date: July 18, 1993

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

The Gothic Revival church at the corner of "C" and Lemon Streets has both Gothic and Craftsman features. The detailing is executed by the use of lancet arches, tower, eave overhangs, leaded-glass windows, and rusticated concrete masonry units in various patterns. The nave is under one massive, gable roof with large overhangs supported by knee braces. An intersecting gable wing projects to the east with matching eaves details. In the north ell of the wings is a square tower with pyramid hip roof containing the lancet arch, north-facing main entry. The tower is further detailed by a tall, lancet-arch vent on each face of the second story and also by gable-capped, stepped buttresses at the corners. This buttress design is repeated on each side of the north facing windows under the main gable. The leaded glass windows are a main feature and are accented by the use of masonry units in various block and dentil patterns. The church is complemented by a parsonage built in a similar style and described in a separate document.

1. **Architectural character:** The First Nazarene Church merits recording as one of the best examples of vernacular Gothic Revival architecture in the city. The leaded, stained-glass windows are of individual merit and the block work of the walls is unique. The Craftsman style roof and mass of the building in combination with the Gothic detailing results in a building that exemplifies the character of the City at the time it was built.
2. **Condition of fabric:** Most of the window sashes are in good condition and are being preserved for use at a separate site. The concrete masonry units appear to be in good condition but as the walls are unreinforced they are not structurally sound. The west wall in has undergone extreme earthquake damage.

B. Description of Exterior

1. **Overall dimensions:** Outside dimensions 58 ' 2 " X 89 '. The nave is under the main, north facing gable wing. An intersecting gable with a slightly lower ridge projects to the east. In the north ell of the wings is a two-story square entry tower with a pyramid hip roof. The tower base measures 13 ' 5 " X 14 ' 2 ".
2. **Foundations:** The raised foundation is built of rusticated concrete masonry units.

3. **Walls:** The walls are built of hollow core, concrete masonry units in various patterns and set in a running bond. The foundation units are in a rusticated pattern resembling rough cut stone. The units of the walls above are in a rectangular pattern with a beveled edge. Separating the two is a water table sill of blocks in a ledge pattern. Other ornamentation is provided by cornice bands and lintels of concrete in various dentil patterns.
4. **Structural system, framing:** The hollow core block provide the structural system and are not reinforced.
5. **Porches, stoops, balconies, hulkheads:** An apron of five concrete steps leads to the front door in the north side of the tower. A secondary entry in the south ell of the intersecting wing is reached by five concrete steps. This entry has been altered by the later addition to the south wall of the church.
6. **Openings**
 - a. **Doorways and doors:** The main door in the north face of the tower is a replacement which, like the original, is set in a lancet arch with concrete surround. The secondary door facing east and located in the south ell of the intersecting wing is a replacement and part of the addition. Another small door on the west side is hoarded up but still displays its lintel of concrete in a dentil pattern.
 - b. **Windows and shutters:** Centered under the gable on the north side are three, very tall windows with fixed, wood sashes accented by the concrete cornice band at the top and a buttress at each side. Each sash has leaded, stained glass composed of diamond and hexagonal panes and an arch floral design at the top. These windows are repeated in the east wall of the intersecting wing. Flanking the buttresses on the north wall are two smaller, double-hung windows also with leaded, stained glass. These have diamond and hexagonal panes in the lower sash and an arched, floral design in the top and are accented by heavy concrete lintels with a dentil band across the top. In the east wall of the tower there are two, matching, double-hung windows. This double-hung design is repeated in a row of four windows on the west wall. Most of these have been damage or altered with signing. Some of these have the diamond and hexagonal pattern in the top sash rather than the arched floral. On the south wall of the intersecting wing is another, matching, double-hung window.
7. **Roof**
 - a. **Shape, covering:** The large, intersecting gable roof with large overhangs, open sheathing, and knee braces in the gable is clad with composition shingles. The pyramid hip on the tower also has open sheathing in the overhangs and is clad with composition shingles.

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b. **Cornice, eaves:** A running cornice band of concrete dentils bands the north and east facades at the top of the first floor level.

c. **Dormers, cupolas, towers:** The two-story entry tower in the ell of the wing at the northeast corner features a pyramid hip roof, corner buttresses, lancet-arch entry and vents and two leaded-glass windows on the east facade.

C. **Description of Interior:** The interior of this church has had many uses over the years which have not served to preserve its integrity. This circumstance in combination with the results of long vacancy has resulted in a completely ruined interior. Even the interior view of the stained-glass windows is blocked by partition walls. Therefore, no attempt will be made to document the original interior.

D. **Site**

1. **General setting and orientation:** The church fills the southwest corner of Lemon and "C" Streets with the entry tower in its northeast corner. The door faces north. Just to the south, facing east is the parsonage described in an attached section of this document. The church site fills one quarter of a downtown city block. On the same block to the south are commercial structures, and to the west is a row of main street structures. Across the street to the north are additional downtown structures and to the east a modern City Hall and Library.

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Date: July 18, 1993

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original Architectural Drawings Not available
- B. Early Views Not available
- C. Interviews No
- D. Bibliography

1. Primary and unpublished sources

City of Ontario Redevelopment Agency Minutes, September 19, 1989.

City of Ontario Redevelopment Agency Minutes, January 5, 1993.

Staff Report, Norman Priest, Gallery Theatre Preservation, August 18, 1992.

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2. Secondary and Published sources

Landmark Legend, Nov. - Dec., 1983.

The Ontario, San Bernardino County California, October 7, 1909.

The Ontario Record, August 20, 1908, January 20, 1908

Conley, Bernice Bedford, Dreamers and Dwellers Ontario and Neighbors,
Privately published, 1982.

Daily Report, December 1, 1979.

Daily Report, May 11, 1926.

Alexander, J.A., George Chaffey, Macmillan & Co. Ltd., London, 1924.

Dumke, Glenn S. Boom of the Eighties, Huntington Library, San Marino,
California. 1944.

E. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated

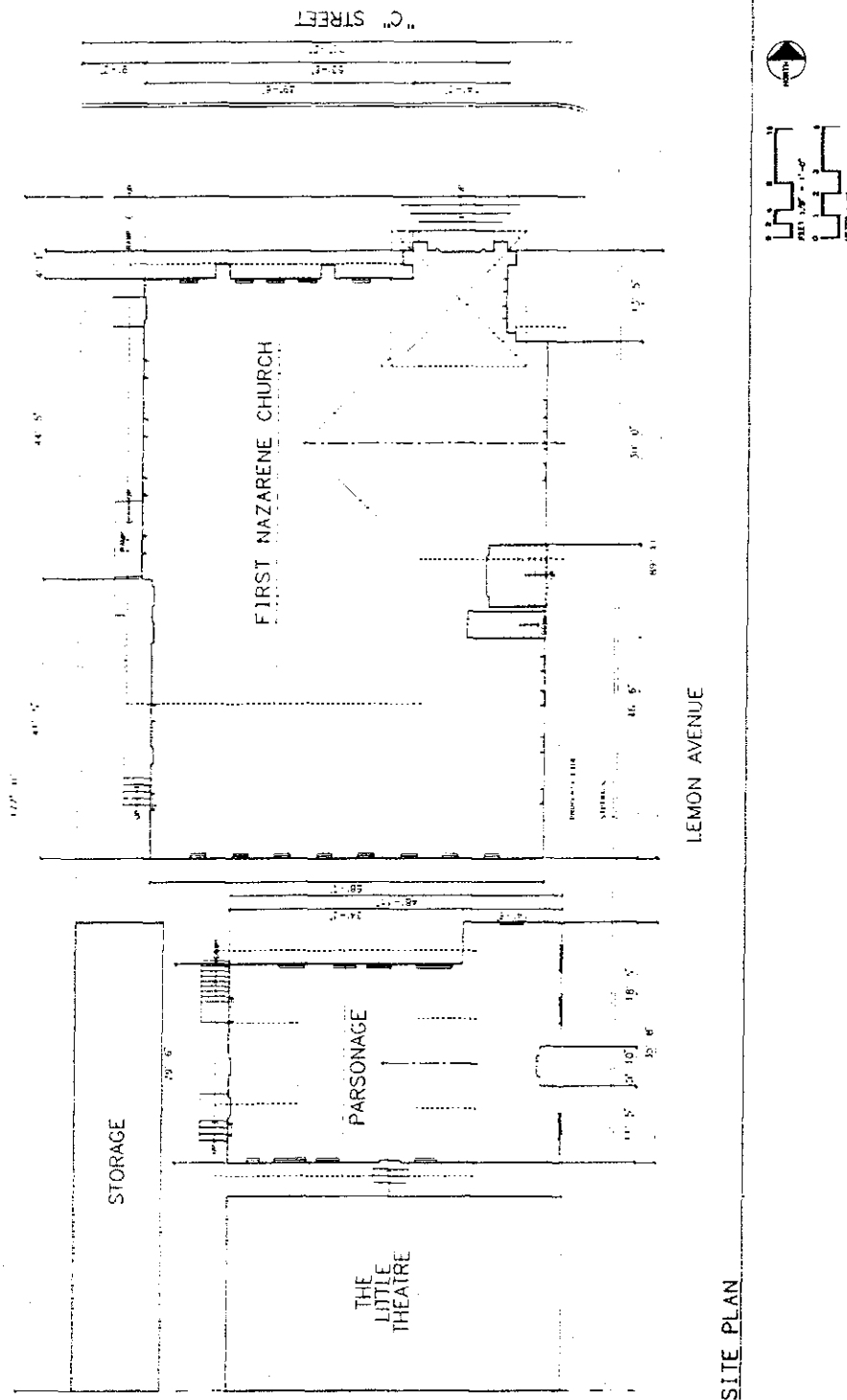
Jar in cornerstone may indicate architect and builder.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project is a donated recording project. Included agencies are:
the Ontario Redevelopment Agency - Norman Graves, staff supervisor ;
and the preservation planning firm, AEGIS, as consultant.
The records were prepared between March 15, 1993 and July 30, 1993.

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SITE PLAN



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PHOTOGRAPH KEY

